



15 August 1974

MO # 1819-74

Mr. Robert L. Borosage

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Dear Mr. Borosage:

Thank you for your invitation to appear at your conference on the Central Intelligence Agency and Covert Actions. As you no doubt are aware from the press, we in CIA have attempted to be responsive to Congressional and public interest in our activities to the extent this is possible while fulfilling my statutory responsibilities to protect intelligence sources and methods. In this we are seeking to conform with our open Constitutional society and at the same time carry out the intelligence functions essential to protect it.

Thus I have accepted invitations to speak before a variety of groups seriously interested in understanding CIA and its functioning. In principle, therefore, I would accept your invitation and welcome the opportunity to present my views on this subject. As you note in your letter, however, I am somewhat impressed with the fact that "most" of the papers and subjects on your program are indeed critical of the Agency and its activities. I am surprised that there is no apparent attempt to examine the need for the contribution that objective and independent intelligence can make to policy-making. I also note that there is no discussion of the potential difficulties posed to our country and our open society by the closed societies with whom we share this world and whose intentions and capabilities vis-a-vis the United States can best be negotiated about or countered if they are known to our national leadership. I think, for example, of the contribution intelligence has made to peace in a variety of situations, from the Cuban missile crisis to the SALT agreements, matters in which I would think your Fund would be interested and would applaud.

Since the basic thrust of your conference seems to be aimed in a critical direction, however, which is certainly your privilege and right under our Constitution, I think the most useful contribution I could make would be to appear toward its end and respond to the questions and criticisms developed in the earlier panels. Thus, I would think my appearance might be better scheduled on the afternoon of September 13th. In that way, I would hope to present to our critics and to those interested in this subject matter my views and responses (and occasional acknowledgements) with respect to the criticisms raised in the course of your conference. I would hope that any such appearance could be conducted with the dignity and openness to conflicting ideas symbolized by its location in a hearing room of the United States Congress. I would certainly not expect to have the last word at the conference, but I think my contribution might be more useful if it were in the later stages.

If this approach seems appropriate to you, I would be happy to discuss any further details required.

Sincerely,

/s/ W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby
Director

cc: The Fund for Peace
1855 Broadway
New York, New York 10023

WEC:blp:jl

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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000900050018-5

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THE FUND FOR PEACE

CONFERENCE ON THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND COVERT ACTIONS

Members of the press, the legal community, current and former government officials and academics will attend a two-day conference on covert actions in a Congressional hearing room in Washington, D.C., on September 12 and 13, 1974. The conference is sponsored by the Center for National Security Studies, a project of the Fund for Peace, and will take place on the Hill under the aegis of Senators Edward Brooke and Philip Hart.

Morton Halperin, Richard Barnet, Herbert Scoville, David Wise and Victor Marchetti will be among the writers who will debate issues such as the purposes of covert actions abroad, the scope of intelligence activities, and government decision-making and covert activities.

Eleven panels will consider various aspects of such issues. Each panel will be headed by an author giving a brief synopsis of a paper prepared for the conference. Two discussants will then respond to the presentation. The questions will then be opened for public discussion by invited guests and observers.

The list of the papers and authors is as follows:

The Scope and Structure of the Intelligence Community by Victor Marchetti and John Marks

Victor Marchetti is a former staff officer of the Office of the Director of the CIA; John Marks is a former State Department official who served as staff assistant to the director of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Their paper will review the scope and structure of the entire intelligence community, including a survey of the activities performed by various agencies, and a discussion of the budget of each agency and what it is devoted to.

Covert Operations Abroad: An Overview by David Wise

David Wise is an author who has written extensively on the CIA and covert operations. His paper will discuss the legal and institutional foundations of covert operations, and then review the types of foreign operations the Agency has sponsored over the years.

The CIA in Laos: A Case Study of Covert War-Making by Fred Branfman

Fred Branfman is the director of the Indochina Resource Center.

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His paper will focus on the Agency activities in Laos, discussing the implications of the Agency's covert war-making capability.

Surreptitious Entry: The CIA's Covert Operations in the United States
by Thomas Ross

Thomas Ross is a reporter with the Chicago Sun-Times. His paper will consider the Agency's activities within the United States, their legal restrictions, and their implications.

National Security Comes Home: The CIA and Watergate
by Walter Pincus

Walter Pincus is an associate editor of the New Republic. His articles on Watergate have been among the most detailed and informative of all commentators. He will write on the participation of the Agency, and ex-Agency operatives, in Watergate, and discuss the implications of covert operations on domestic freedom.

Covert Operations and International Law
by Richard Falk

Richard Falk is a professor of international law at Princeton University. He will analyse covert operations in relation to international standards of conduct which this nation has pledged to follow.

Covert Operations and the Constitution
by Robert Borosage

Robert Borosage is the director of the Center for National Security Studies. His paper will discuss the constitutional violations inherent in a secret operational institution. He will consider questions of secrecy, budgetary expenditures, and legal charter. He will suggest that a republican constitution imposes some fundamental limits and guidelines on government, limits which are violated by the CIA.

A Review of Selected Successes
by Roger Morris

Roger Morris is a former member of the National Security Staff under Henry Kissinger. His paper will select three generally accepted successes of the CIA. He will ask what purposes and interests were served by our intervention, and which interests were harmed.

A Reassessment of Intelligence Technology
by Herbert Scoville

Herbert Scoville is a former deputy director of the CIA and a former assistant director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. His paper will consider the major technological programs, assess their degree of provocation, their importance in intelligence gathering, and their importance to decision makers.

3.

Covert Operations and Decision-Making
by Morton Halperin

Morton Halperin has served on the National Security Staff and in the Department of Defense, and presently serves as an in-house consultant to the Center for National Security Studies. His paper will analyse the effects of covert operations on intelligence assessments, on executive decision-making, and on congressional oversight of foreign policy.

The Unnecessary Intelligence
by Richard Barnet

Richard Barnet is co-director of the Institute for Policy Studies. He will discuss the extent to which the intelligence we gather provides either unnecessary or undesirable knowledge. His paper will consider the degree to which constant surveillance magnifies the importance of otherwise insignificant events in the eyes of decision-makers.

Two panelists will be invited as discussants for each paper. Additionally, other participants in the conference will be invited, to insure a variety of views and perspectives in the conference discussion.